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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 10/040,245 | 12/31/2001 | John Zimmerman | US 010683 | 9262 |

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EXAMINER

ALAM, SHAHID AL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2162

DATE MAILED: 12/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application N . | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/040,245 | ZIMMERMAN ET AL. |
| | Examiner | Art Unit |
| | Shahid Al Alam | 2162 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 July 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1 – 4, 7 – 9, 12 – 14 and 17 – 19 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 5,6,10,11,15,16,20 and 21 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 07 May 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed on July 26, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for the following reasons:

Applicant argue that the Vamparys reference does not teach initializing a user profile with a rating value provided by the user which is used to initialize a subset of two or more of a plurality of attributes contained in the user profile.

Examiner respectfully disagrees all of the allegations as argued. Examiner, in his previous office action, gave detail explanation of claimed limitation and pointed out exact locations in the cited prior art.

Examiner is entitled to give claim limitations their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification.

Interpretation of Claims-Broadest Reasonable Interpretation

During patent examination, the pending claims must be 'given the broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification.' Applicant always has the opportunity to amend the claims during prosecution and broad interpretation by the examiner reduces the possibility that the claim, once issued, will be interpreted more broadly than is justified. *In re Prater*, 162 USPQ 541,550-51 (CCPA 1969).

With respect to Applicant's above arguments, Examiner maintains that Vampray's teachings of profiles of a famous person as well as Figure 3, (sheet 3 of 10, i.e., #306) clearly indicates a value associated with the processing of user profiles in a manner similar to applicant's claim language. Thus, the rejection is maintained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1 – 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "A search system" in claim; claim 7 recites the limitation "A content reception system" in claim; claim 12 recites the limitation "A method of searching information items" in claim; and claim 17 recites the limitation "A signal" in claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1 – 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

MPEP 2106 IV.B.2.(b)

A claim that requires one or more acts to be performed defines a process. However, not all processes are statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101. Schrader, 22 F.3d at 296, 30 USPQ2d at 1460. To be statutory, a claimed computer-related process must either: (A) result in a physical transformation outside the computer for which a practical application in the technological arts is either disclosed in the specification or would have been known to a skilled artisan, or (B) be limited to a practical application within the technological arts.

Claims 1 – 21, in view of the above cited MPEP sections, are not statutory because they merely recite a number of computing steps without producing any tangible result and/or being limited to a practical application within the technological arts. The use of a computer has not been indicated.

MPEP 2106.II.A

A process that consists solely of the manipulation of an abstract idea is not concrete or tangible. See *In re Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d 1354, 1360, 31 USPQ2d 1754, 1759 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Claims 1 - 21, in view of the above cited MPEP sections, are not statutory because they merely recite a number of computing steps without producing any tangible result and/or being limited to a practical application within the technological arts.

(c) Natural Phenomena Such as Electricity and Magnetism

Claims 17 – 21 recite nothing but the physical characteristics of a form of energy, such as a frequency, voltage, or the strength of a magnetic field, define energy or magnetism, *per se*, and as such are nonstatutory natural phenomena. *O'Reilly v. Morse*, 56 U.S. (15 How.) 62, 112 – 14 (1853). See MPEP 2106 IV.B.1. c.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1 – 4, 7 – 9, 12 – 14 and 17 – 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by WO 01/15449 A1 issued to Franck Vamparys (“Vamparys”).

With respect to claim 1, 7, 12 and 17, Vamparys teaches an explicit user profile containing user-specific ratings for a plurality of attributes (page 5, lines 11 – 15), wherein a user provides a rating value to initialize a subset of two or more of the plurality of attributes during initialization of the explicit user profile (page 9, lines 8 – 11); a recommender system employing the explicit user profile in evaluating each of a plurality of search items (page 5, lines 22 – 23); and a controller enabling the user, while viewing information regarding an item subject to evaluation by the recommender system after initialization of the explicit user profile, to manipulate ratings values for each of the plurality of attributes associated with the item (page 11, lines 3 – 15).

As to claims 2, 8, 13 and 18, the user provides rating values during initialization of the explicit user profile for only: one or more supersets of attributes within the plurality of attributes; or one or more attributes having possible values defining a scope of all search items (see Figure 2).

As to claim 3, rating values are included within the explicit user profile based on a content consumption history for the user (page 5, lines 19 – 22).

As to claims 4, 9, 14 and 19, the recommender system employs current values within the explicit user profile in evaluating each of the plurality of search items during a search (page 5, lines 19-23).

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20 and 21 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shahid Al Alam whose telephone number is (571) 272-4030. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00 A.M.- 4:00 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John E Breene can be reached on (571) 272-4107. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Shahid Al Alam
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2162

22 December 2004